(c) whether, in the prevailing situation, it would be worthwhile to pursue negotiations with the military rulers in Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) At the Annual Commanders Confernece on 24th November, 1999, the Prime Minister stated that the recent military coup in Pakistan is a matter of grave concern and that the present rulers are all too likely to intensify the proxy war and engage even in Kargil type misadventure.

(b) A high state of defence preparedness is being maintained and a constant vigil is being exercised to meet any threat all along the border. The requirements of our Armed Forces are reviewed on a continuing basis for induction of modernised weapons and weapon systems and keeping in view threat perceptions and the prevailing strategic/ security environment as also emerging technologies.

(c) Government have called upon Pakistan to take steps to repair trust and confidence and facilitate the process by creating a proper environment in which meaningful dialogue can take place. However, Government have seen no response yet that Pakistan is going in this direction.

Modernisation of Indian Army

2165. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recent Kargil conflict has shown utter lack of modern equipment with the Indian Army and other essential equipments required for conflicts in such border areas for which Government had to rush for imports;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for failure to modernise the Indian Army, keeping pace with the requirements and necessities; and

(d) whether, with the experience gained, Government have formulated/propose to formulate a time-bound programme for modernisation of Indian Army?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) Modernisation of Armed Forces is a continuous process necessitated by changing threat perceptions and advancements in technology. The Army's requirement for equipment, ammunition, clothing and other items is reviewed in the Army HQ from time to time and projected to Ministry of Defence. Action to meet the assessed priority requirement is taken within the available resources.

All requirements projected by the Army in the backdrop of Kargil Operation for supply of equipment, armament and material are expeditiously processed.